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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT: HIS DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF POLITICAL/CIVIL-MILITARY CONCEPTS DURING THE MEXICAN WAR

BY

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U.S. Army War College CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE:

General Winfield Scott: His Development and Application of Political/Civil Military

Concepts During the Mexican War

FORMAT:

Strategy Research Project

DATE:

03 April 2002

PAGES: 28

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

General Winfield Scott was the United States' preeminent military leader of his day. For 53 years he served his nation. He served under 14 presidents—13 of them as a general officer. He was the General in Chief of the United States Army for the last two decades of his career (today's equivalent of the Army Chief of Staff). The study of great leaders from our past provides a focus for analysis of leadership skills. By looking at what shaped the leader—in this case General Winfield Scott—and his accomplishments, we can apply the lessons learned to our environment.

General Scott was the architect for the planning, resourcing and conduct of the Mexican War as well as the War's most famous commander. During the war General Scott was more than an exemplary soldier and leader—he was served as a politician and diplomat. He skillfully manipulated the political environment through civil military affairs policy that ultimately contributed (and possibly led) to the effective administration of government in Mexico.

This paper seeks to document Scott's development into a leader and diplomat and to examine his methods and their effectiveness in shaping the strategic and political environment during the United States war with Mexico.

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GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT: HIS DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF POLITICAL/CIVIL-MILITARY CONCEPTS DURING THE MEXICAN WAR

GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT'S HISTORICAL EFFECTIVENESS AND INFLUENCE

The study of great leaders from our past provides a focus for analysis of leadership skills. By looking at what shaped the leader--in this case General Winfield Scott--and his accomplishments, viewed from a current perspective, we can apply the lessons learned to our environment. General Scott's legacy and impact on present day America and today's Army is extensive and worthy of analysis.

General Winfield Scott was the preeminent soldier of his day. His career spanned 53 years. He served 14 presidents, 13 as a general officer. He was the General in Chief of the United States Army (today's equivalent of the Army Chief of Staff) for the last two decades of his career. General Scott was the architect for the planning, resourcing and conduct of the Mexican War as well as the War's most famous commander. General Scott was more than an exemplary soldier and leader—he was a consummate politician and diplomat. He served in the political and diplomatic realm for the U.S. Government in the early stages of the campaign for Mexico City. He skillfully manipulated the political environment through civil military affairs policy that ultimately contributed (and possibly led) to the effective administration of government in Mexico.

This paper seeks to document Scott's development into a leader and diplomat and to examine his methods and their effectiveness in shaping the strategic and political environment during the United States war with Mexico.

SCOTT—BACKGROUND AND GROWTH OF A LEADER

Born in Virginia, Scott entered the College of William and Mary to study law—a profession that Scott described as "the usual road to political advancement." While at college, Scott became enamored with the lives of great warriors such as Caesar and Scipio Africanus. Scott's first military experience was as a corporal in the Virginia Militia during the Chesapeake Affair, precipitated by a British attack on a U.S. merchant ship. Once the crisis was over, Scott pursued a legal career in South Carolina. When Scott learned that the United States was expanding the Army and Navy due to increasing tensions with Britain, he enlisted the assistance of Senator William Branch Giles of Virginia in a bid to gain a commission in the expanded service. Giles arranged a personal office call with President Jefferson. The President promised Scott a commission as a Captain contingent on congressional approval of his request to

increase the size of the military. On May 8, 1808, the government commissioned Winfield Scott, a man with little experience in military science, as a Captain in the U.S. Army. His orders were to raise a company, to take it to Norfolk, Virginia, and to be prepared to embark for New Orleans.²

WAR OF 1812:

In the War of 1812, Scott gained his first combat experience. He and Andrew Jackson emerged from the War as two of its most conspicuous heroes. During this War, besides compiling an outstanding combat record, was first exposed to the problems of dealing with a foreign people and government and people—part of this exposure was as a prisoner of war in Canada. He demonstrated superb skills in the political and civil arena, gaining influential political and civilian friends. While attending a reception at the White House after his repatriation in 1813, members of Congress and President Madison asked him to render a full report of British behavior during the period he was a prisoner of war. Congress promoted Scott to Brigadier General in 1814. Building on his actions during the War of 1812, Scott continued to operated in the civil, political and military realms for his entire career.

NEW TACTICS FOR THE U. S. ARMY

After the war, Winfield Scott became an agent for transformation of the U. S. Army. Scott was the primary engine for change of doctrine and tactics in the United States Army, and his model for that change was Europe. Appointed in 1815 to a military board charged with formulating a new system of discipline (called tactics), Scott went to Europe where he observed the armies of other nations. Already familiar with the French system (which had guided the training of his regiment and brigade during the recent war), Scott borrowed heavily from it when he produced a system of tactics for the United States Army. An edition of the new manual appeared in 1817. (Later versions were published and republished in 1836; 1840; 1846; 1847; 1848; 1852; 1857; 1860 and 1861.) In 1818, Scott began collecting English and French books and essays pertaining to the governance of armies in garrison and on campaign. Drawing on this research, he compiled a new book called General Regulations. In 1825, Congress adopted this work as the official guide for governing the United States Army.³

INFLUENCES ON WINFIELD SCOTT

Scott clearly gravitated toward the French in the selection of training doctrine for forces during the War of 1812. For example, while encamped near Buffalo without formal texts to instruct soldiers in tactics, Scott adopted for the Army of the Niagara the French system of

tactics of which he had a copy of the original text. Scott was clearly influenced by Napoleon, stating, "Napoleon's declarations and memoirs occurred to me" when he was preparing to write his own memoirs.⁴ Scott cites Napoleon's experience in Russia where "Napoleon lost the flower of his Army."⁵

Even after gaining congressional approval to prepare a new regulation of tactics for the military, Scott clearly used the classic French texts as a baseline for his regulations (the Military Institutes) for the militia and the regular military in 1834-5. Well read in French operations, he stated, "The Legislation Militaire of France was indeed most copious containing all that can be desired for an army in the field. . ."

During this time in his life, Scott began to develop his own ideas about how to conduct civil-military operations. To understand Scott's appreciation of the criticality of conducting effective civil-military operations one must, as he did, examine the actions and literature of the great captains of that period in history. French tactics and strategy as practiced by Napoleon heavily influenced all contemporary leaders with the exception of Frederick the Great. Key publications included Marshal Maurice De Saxe's book My Reveries upon the Art of War, published in 1757; The Instruction of Frederick the Great for his Generals, published in 1747; Military Maxim's of Napoleon, published in 1827; and Jomini and his Summary on the Art of War, published in 1838. These great captains in history have differing approaches on dealing with civil populations.

FREDERICK THE GREAT.

Under the heading of Subsistence and Commissary, Frederick discusses assembling subsistence magazines for the feeding of an army stating, "There are two methods of assembling magazines: one is to collect the grain in the country and credit the contributions of the peasants and gentlemen against their regular tax. The other alternative is to use contractors but, unfortunately, these men plunder pitilessly."

Frederick the Great also advised, in his paragraph titled "Beer, Brandy and Sutlers", that "all breweries within enemy territory that are found near the encampment are put to work." Frederick also advised that "it is necessary to protect the sutlers, especially in enemy country, and send them out to pillage with the forage in all the territory where the peasants have deserted their harvests." ⁸

MARSHAL DE SAXE.

The French marshal advocated vigorous discipline to ensure that pillaging remained to a minimum. Adequate, but not overly zealous, measures must be in place to ensure the army can control pillaging. This was a primary concern because loss of control or discipline was disastrous for the army—not because of any liberal feelings De Saxe might have harbored for the local population. In line with the total war advocated by De Saxe, he also recommended assessing taxes and organized foraging to support the invading army.⁹

NAPOLEON.

Maxim 70: "The conduct of a general in a conquered country is encompassed with difficulties. If he is severe he exasperates and increases the number of his enemies: if he is mild he inspires hopes which, since they cannot be realized, cause the abuses and vexations unavoidably incident to war only to stand out in bolder relief. A conqueror should know how to employ by turns severity, justice and leniency in suppressing or preventing disturbances."

Maxim 110: "Conquered provinces should be maintained in obedience to the conquerors by moral means such as the responsibility of local governments and the method of organization and administration. Hostages are among the most powerful means, but to be effective they should be many and chosen from the preponderant elements and the people must be convinced that immediate death of the hostages will follow violation of their pledges."

BARON ANTOINE HENRI JOMINI.

De Saxe and Jomini both fought with Napoleon and the Napoleonic period in Europe greatly influenced Jomini. Jomini's <u>Art of War</u> contains a chapter titled Depots and their Relation to Marches. Jomini states that "A general should be capable of making all the resources of the invaded country contribute to the success of his enterprises. Caesar said that war should support war and he is generally believed to have lived at the expense of the countries he overran." Jomini further points out "the large armies that invaded Belgium and Germany lived sometimes in the houses of the people, sometimes by requisitions laid upon the country, and often by plunder and pillage."

In the chapter titled "Logistics or the Practical Art of Moving Armies"—Jomini discusses the establishment of a "good line of operation and of depots to link the Army to its base."

Transportation pools are collocated at these bases to project resources. Jomini does not discuss how these depots are stocked—whether by foraging, requisition or transportation from

friendly sources— or if, like Caesar, the local population of the invaded country should support the war. ¹³

BEGINNINGS OF A DIPLOMAT

During the nullification crisis of 1832, President Andrew Jackson sent Winfield Scott to Charleston, South Carolina, to calm passions and urge restraint. General Scott continued to develop his diplomatic skills during that brief, but unsuccessful, assignment.

SEMINOLE WARS.

General Scott's next key endeavor was his involvement in the Seminole Wars during the mid-thirties. Scott played a key role in the wars, learning in the process the difficulties of fighting a guerilla force. He learned from the challenges of relocating the Cherokee Indians from the southeast but was "troubled about the justice of the removal, and that an executive decision had decreed an action that Americans considered inhumane." Scott's manner was firm yet sympathetic. He directed his men to be "courteous and show compassion," and he even agreed to allow the "Cherokees to oversee their own removal."

CALMING THE CANADIAN BORDER.

In 1839, President Martin Van Buren sent Scott to the Canadian border to try to calm hostilities aroused after pro-British Canadians seized and burned an American ship, the Caroline, killing a United States citizen. Returning to the Niagara frontier where he initially made his reputation, Scott quashed attempts at retaliation while shoring up American interests in the area. Winfield Scott's role in peacemaking was a new endeavor for him and as a result of this activity he became known as the "Great Pacificator."

WHIG CONVENTION OF 1840.

Scott received 42 votes for his candidacy for president at the Whig Convention of 1840. This recognition spurred his political aspirations, which never diminished during the remainder of his life. His political ambitions were common among the senior military leaders of this period. The separation of their political and military lives seemed to blur with great military achievement stimulating future political opportunities. Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, and William Henry Harrison are examples of this dynamic relationship between politics and military service. Winfield Scott was certainly no exception.

GENERAL IN CHIEF.

Appointed General in Chief of the United States Army in 1841—a position he gained at least partly by outlasting his competitors—Scott already had gained a reputation for skills in the fields of diplomacy and politics. As a result of his military and political experiences as well as his study of other leaders' philosophy, Scott was eminently qualified to operate in both realms with comfort.

PRELUDE TO WAR WITH MEXICO.

Prior to the war with Mexico James K. Polk was elected president. The issue of the annexation of Texas split the Democratic Party before electing Polk to office. Strong elements in the Party, such as Andrew Jackson, clearly supported annexation and had for some time. Polk, as a disciple of Jackson (earning the moniker of "Young Hickory"), echoed Jackson's views though it appeared that Polk's views were his own. The country viewed President Polk as the principle architect of the War. Congressman Alexander Stephens of Georgia, when referring to the Mexican War, termed it as the "executive War" resulting from Polk's "imprudence, indiscretion and mismanagement." Polk's military policies were calculated to achieve concrete territorial objectives, "and to do that he had to bring power to bear on Mexico proper to force an acceptance of the most favorable territorial arrangements."

Clearly, Polk's aims for the conflict extended beyond the mere re-annexation of Texas. He intimated in private to his cabinet as early as the autumn of 1845 that, although the war had not been undertaken "with a view to acquire either California or New Mexico or any other portion of the Mexican Territory", in a treaty, the United States "would if practicable obtain California and such other portion of the Mexican territory as would be sufficient to indemnify our claimants on Mexico and to defray the expenses of the war." ¹⁹

THE PRESIDENTS CHOICE.

Winfield Scott was President Polk's "Agent of Destiny" in the War with Mexico. President Polk was less impressed with Scott's accomplishments than with the fact that "Scott was a Whig party member who had received 42 votes for the presidential nomination in the Whig Convention in 1840." Unfortunately, during the War with Mexico Scott had to deal with President James K. Polk, a man who was extremely political and "who possessed little personal magnetism...and uncompromising independence."

President Polk chose General Scott for the campaign in Central Mexico for several reasons. Congress refused to promote fellow Democratic Party member and Senator (Colonel)

Thomas Benton to the rank of Major General to prosecute the campaign in Mexico. General Zachary Taylor had fallen out of President Polk's favor (Polk believed that General Taylor possessed "limited intelligence" and he trusted "Taylor less than he did Scott"). Primarily, Polk selected Scott because he was the only general capable of handling the extremely complex amphibious operation followed by operations against a national capital deep in the heart of the nation. Polk remained extremely concerned that "if an invasion commanded by Scott was successful, the Whig general would be catapulted into the presidency in the upcoming election of 1848."

During a four-hour meeting on May 14, 1846 with the President and Secretary of War Marcy, General Scott provided input for the conduct of the War on Mexico. Polk recorded in his diary that he came away with a low estimation of Scott, writing he "did not impress me favorably as a military man" and that his advice was "of no great value." However, Polk was reluctant to grant Scott anything less than he asked for the conduct of the War, as he was "not willing to take the responsibility of any failure of the campaign." ²⁵

SCOTT DEVELOPS CIVIL MILITARY DOCTRINE.

Scott was a visionary relative to civil-military operations in the prosecution of war with Mexico. His vision for the conduct of operations and relations with the Mexican populace appears to be his own. His ideas regarding the conduct of soldiers while in Mexico appear to be unprompted by either the executive or legislative branches of the U. S. Government and are not consistent with the practice of his contemporary general officers. Scott was concerned about soldier conduct as he prepared for command in Mexico because of the reports he had received indicating "wild volunteers as soon as beyond the Rio Grande committed with impunity all sorts of atrocities on the persons and properties of Mexicans." ²⁶ Some of the crimes including killing soldiers who were in the process of surrender (this occurred near Monterrey in the area of operation under the command of General Zachary Taylor).

Because of these observations, Scott felt that strict control of his forces was necessary, since neither the articles of war nor the constitution provided "any court for trial or punishment of murder, rape, theft." The means by which Scott planned to curb such abuses was a document he called his Martial Law Order. The Secretary of War refused to provide any official comment on Scott's plan for establishing martial law in a foreign country. As a result, Scott received no official guidance. Scott sent a copy of his Martial Law order to General Zachary Taylor, who dismissed the document as "a learned commentary on the military code."

WAR WITH MEXICO.

GUIDANCE AND OBJECTIVES.

Guidance from President Polk and Secretary of War William Marcy was limited. The President outlined his general objectives for the war in his annual address to Congress: "the war will be continued to be prosecuted with *vigor*...with a view to obtain an honorable peace and thereby secure ample *indemnity* for the expenses of the war..."

"The objectives for the War were not necessarily military. Small military units could capture California and New Mexico. In both Zachary Taylor's campaign below the Rio Grande and Winfield Scott's campaign in central Mexico, the primary objectives were political and diplomatic, not military. The war in the Rio Grande valley provided an excuse for the seizure of New Mexico and California. The subsequent campaign in central Mexico was intended to force the Mexican's to accept a treaty recognizing the U. S. acquisition of these provinces."

"From the beginning of his administration, Polk seems to have looked upon the conquest of Mexico as an easy matter." Polk assumed that the forces necessary to carry out his strategic plan could be created almost immediately through the enlistment of large numbers of volunteers and that the War would be over before the expiration of their rather short term enlistments. 31

General Scott knew that "effective military forces could not be created, equipped, trained and transported to the Rio Grande in only a few weeks." ³² This fundamental difference in perspective would help cloud the perceptions and skew the expectations of each of these strategic leaders.

"Scott was sent to Mexico with only the vaguest of instructions from the President and the Secretary of War. Guidance stated "It is not proposed to control your operations by definite and positive instructions...you are left to prosecute them (the War) as your judgment...shall dictate..." The instructions to General Scott contained no military objectives and it is possible that the Democratic President and Secretary "were making sure that the Whig general could be blamed for anything that went wrong."

Scott outlined his objectives for the War in a memorandum to the Secretary of War on November 12, describing his intent to capture the Port of Vera Cruz and then "open a new and better line of operations upon the enemy's capital." To accomplish his objectives, he needed to arrive prior to the onset of the oppressive hot weather and its attendant tropical diseases.

THE AREA OF OPERATION AND LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS.

In planning his strategy for military operations in central Mexico, Scott decided to land in the extremely inhospitable region in Mexico known as the *Tierra Caliente* (hot country). Yellow fever was so prevalent there during the summer months that it was "a greater danger that any human foe." Because of this difficult climate, Scott planned to reach this region by February 1, 1847 before the hot season. Unfortunately, because of transport ship delays his force did not arrive until March 2.

Demonstrating his appreciation for the area of operation and the complexity of the task before him in this first major military amphibious operation on foreign soil since the War of 1812, Scott requested "a \$50,000 dollar slush fund for use at his discretion. He also undertook the first ever large scale construction of specially built landing craft in American history [141 craft were requested and 67 were ready for the amphibious operation at Vera Cruz]."

The area of operation and lines of communication were remarkable particularly given the effectiveness of communications in the 1840s. Messages to and from central Mexico often took over 20 days to reach Washington. Notification of Scott's landing at Vera Cruz reached the president 23 days after the event occurred.³⁷ This dynamic complicated the communication and synchronization of intent at both the strategic and operational levels of command. Given the challenges of this area of operation, Scott needed to ensure that he was able to avoid the type of guerilla activity that complicated France's operations in the Iberian Peninsula—good relations with the Catholic Church and the Mexican people were essential.

SCOTT'S INFLUENCE WITH CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE MEXICAN PEOPLE.

Scott established good civil military relationships early in the campaign. In fact, Scott demonstrated an early understanding of the strategic importance of effective political-military operations. On learning of a soldier in Zachary Taylor's area of operation who had been returned to the United States by the Secretary of War after murdering a Mexican, Scott stated that the soldier should have been shot "rather than rewarding him with a discharge."

To minimize such infractions when he began operations in central Mexico, Scott prepared an order for martial law that treated both soldiers and civilians equally, outlawing "murder, rape, assault, robbery, desecration of churches and other religious edifices, disruption of religious services and destruction of private property." Scott provided a copy of the order to the U. S. Attorney General and the Secretary of War and though "alarmed" at the harshness of the order, they did not block its adoption or enforcement. Scott made the order effective on his arrival in Tampico in February 1847.

Always the student of French military tactics, battles and strategy, General Scott took heed of the French experience on the Iberian Peninsula when their harsh treatment of the local populace resulted in the marginalization of their forces—involving them further in a more guerrilla-like war. Scott's understanding of Jominian strategy may also have contributed to his appreciation for maintaining good political-military relations. Jomini counseled, "Calm the popular passion" and "display courtesy, gentleness...and deal justly" with the local population. With this in mind, Scott began his campaign in Central Mexico with the siege of the city of Vera Cruz.

OPERATIONS IN MEXICO

VERA CRUZ

On the ninth of March when Scott Landed in Vera Cruz it was the "largest amphibious assault in American history until allied forces landed in North Africa a century later." Scott began his assault of the fortress at Vera Cruz on March 24th and the inhabitants and the city itself capitulated on the 27th with a loss of only thirteen U.S. soldiers.

Scott immediately began the campaign for the hearts and minds of the Mexican population by emplacing martial law, using hired local workers to clear the streets of debris, and feeding the hungry citizens. Soon shops and markets reopened. Scott demonstrated his commitment to equal justice under his martial law. He jailed two soldiers for theft. Another soldier received twelve lashes for beating a woman and performed hard labor for the remainder of the war wearing a ball and chain. Scott supported hanging a man "after a military commission found him guilty of rape and theft." The net effect was the population accepted the occupation with little resistance. Scott demonstrated his personal commitment to his rule of law when some soldiers offered him fresh food. Upon interrogation, he determined the soldiers had foraged for the food. Scott not only refused to accept the items, but threatened to deal severely with future conduct of this type. Scott carried forward and expanded his policies at his next staging area in Puebla.

POLK'S DIPLOMATIC APPOINTEE

Scott's success at Vera Cruz, 10 April 1847, came as surprise in Washington and created a maelstrom of diplomatic activity. Scott's unprecedented quick victory left the Polk government with a need to rapidly decide who would be the President's agent for negotiating a treaty with the Mexican Government in Mexico City—clearly it would not be a highly visible Whig general

and potential future presidential candidate. On May 6, 1847, Nicholas Trist arrived in Vera Cruz to represent the Polk administration.

Winfield Scott's relationship with Nicholas Trist, the President's appointed negotiator with the Mexican Government, was abysmal in the beginning. This was probably the result of a lack of foresight by the Polk administration in planning for a diplomatic solution to this conflict. Clearly, the reaction of General Scott to Nicholas Trist was an indicator that diplomacy was not a significant concern for the administration in the planning phase of the war. The fact that the administration never discussed these issues with the senior commander was a significant oversight.

Scott clearly felt that he alone had the responsibility to act in this capacity for the government, and Scott was "angry that Polk would not allow him to conduct the negotiations." However, Scott acted poorly in dealing with this situation by not making greater efforts at understanding the important role of Mr. Trist, a dedicated public servant. Unfortunately, President Polk's political paranoia did a further disservice to General Scott by recommending that Trist could "freely consult with his (Polk's) friend General Gideon Pillow" who was subordinate to General Scott but not affording him the same trust and courtesy. ⁴²

Relations between Scott and Trist began to thaw on receipt of the communication from General Santa Anna in mid-June that indicated his willingness to accept a bribe of \$10,000 dollars with the promise of a conditional \$1,000,000 if the general could stimulate "the proper channels so that talks can begin." Because of this thawing in relations between General Scott and Nicholas Trist, Scott was able to regain a greater involvement in diplomatic relations. Unfortunately, Santa Anna changed his mind after receiving the \$10,000 dollar bribe, and Scott's Army began their march to Mexico City after a four-month wait for reinforcements at Pueblo.

PUEBLO

After a stunning victory at Cerro Gordo followed by a brief encampment at the city of Jalapa, General Scott decided to move to Puebla, Mexico. Puebla was a larger city that could provide the provisions required by the force at his command. While in Puebla, Scott recognized the significance of the Catholic Church in Mexico and ensured the protection of church rights. As one sign of respect, he required soldiers to salute priests. To protect Mexican rights, he soon found it necessary to restrict soldiers to the city where foraging soldiers would find it to difficult to kill domestic animals belonging to the Mexicans." In addition (at least in part to minimize foraging) Scott ensured that his soldiers received at least two months of back pay

owed them. Soldiers went to the markets to the delight of the Mexicans who profited from the commerce. In fact, though prices were inflated they were less than what American sutlers charged. To add to stability in the area of Puebla, Scott hired a local bandit, Manual Dominguez, and his gang of over 200 men to serve as "guides, couriers and spies" and they "even acted as an anti guerrilla force by sweeping the countryside around the American Army."

Because of his direct action, Scott ensured stability and provided a safe and just environment within which life and commerce could flourish. General Scott's attendance at church services, demonstration of equal justice under martial law and provision of general security provided a "stark contrast between the Americans…and their [the Mexican] government."

MEXICO CITY

The Army departed Puebla and moved to Mexico City. They were tremendously successful enroute at both Charubusco and Contreras. However, in order to continue operations Scott had to sever himself from his base and long line of communication with Vera Cruz. The President and press almost universally criticized this move. Foreign newspapers, such as *the London Morning Chronicle*, and even Field Marshal Lord Wellington declared, "Scott is lost! He can't take the city and he can't fall back on his bases." However, Scott was successful.

On August 21st, while enroute to his new headquarters near Mexico City, he and Nicholas Trist met with a Mexican general officer under a flag of truce. Scott once again agreed to a cease-fire, allowing Mr. Trist time to negotiate an end to the war. On 7 September, after Santa Anna had violated the armistice by preparing defensive positions, and after Trist had not been productive in his negotiations, Scott formally terminated the armistice. The attack by U. S. forces in turn of Molino Del Ray, Chapultepec and finally on Mexico City followed. However, with the city under U. S. control the challenge of political and military government remained.

Scott rapidly followed in Mexico City the pattern of enlightened government he established in both Vera Cruz and Pueblo. He used the veiled threat of retaliation and harsh rule if violence did not cease. Once he established fundamental order, he forbid soldiers from residing in private homes unless invited, and he ordered churches reopened. General Scott avoided the type of incidents that might precipitate greater violence by forbidding occupying forces to travel in small groups.

Scott, at the direction of President Polk, levied an assessment on the Mexicans for the cost of occupation. The American public was growing "daily more weary of the war"and the levy

would help the President "if he could show that expenditures for the occupation were being kept to a minimum." Scott established the cost of the occupation at an arbitrary amount of \$150,000 dollars on September 14th— the day he occupied Mexico City. Mexican officials considered that a fair amount. He then went further and evaluated the contribution of all the Mexican states to their federal government and, by the end of 1847, "he announced an annual assessment of 3 million dollars on the nineteen states of Mexico."

SCOTT'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE CAMPAIGN FOR MEXICO.

Scott's performance in shaping the strategic and political environment in Mexico was insightful and effective. He effectively pursued a strategy that sought to gain a military decision as soon as possible without compromising the forces he needed to gain victory in all phases in the campaign. He defeated the garrison at Vera Cruz with only 13 killed—an economy of operations that was essential to save a limited force for future operations was essential. Scott could little afford to get involved in a war of attrition on foreign soil. His early diplomatic interactions with local authorities and the clergy set the stage for future operations and established a bond of trust between the general and the Mexican people. Scott understood his environment and used it to his advantage.

The occupation of Puebla was similarly effective, with the addition that at this location he began to use economics and commerce as a means to create a friendly interaction with the local populace. This caused Santa Anna great consternation and prepared Scott for his more challenging task of conducting operations against Mexico City. Although President Polk wanted the war concluded as soon as possible, the end of many soldiers' enlistment periods forced a strategic pause at Puebla.

In assessing Scott's participation in the bribe offered to Santa Anna, Scott was a willing participant in this action as he controlled the funds used for the bribe. It appears, however, that Scott and Trist were merely seeking an expedient method to reach a political solution to the war without shedding any more blood. However, Scott failed to consider the effects this bribe might have on the Polk administration and the American public. General Scott may have erred in offering a bribe to Santa Anna, however, this should not detract form the overall success of his campaign, the outcomes of the American War with Mexico, and the successful administration of the military government in Mexico City. General Scott was so effective in political-military matters that he was approached by a delegation of distinguished Mexican citizens with a unique proposal. These citizens claimed to have the support of 40 percent of the population and over half the Mexican senate. The delegation wanted General Scott to serve as the nations "interim

president" and prepare the nation for eventual annexation into the United States. For this position, he would receive a sum of "1.25 million dollars and the president's normal salary." 48

Scott declined the offer and upon his return to the United States he returned to his position as General in Chief of the United States Army–retaining the position for the remainder of his career. The preceding paragraphs describe what Major General Winfield Scott accomplished during his Mexican Campaign; now let us look at these accomplishments in light of current Joint and Army civil-military operations doctrine.

CURRENT CIVIL MILITARY OPERATIONS DOCTRINE:

Major General Winfield Scott demonstrated exceptional vision related to civil-military operations even by current standards. General Scott's operations when compared to current Joint and Army civil-military operations publications/manuals demonstrate a striking similarity. Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations (Joint Publication 3-57), for example, states "Civil-military operations encompass the activities that Joint Force Commanders take to establish and maintain positive relations between their forces, civil authorities, and the general population, resources and institutions in friendly, neutral or hostile areas where their forces are employed to facilitate military operations and to consolidate and achieve United States objectives."

This publication further states, "because of the political-military nature and sensitivity of civil affairs activities undertaken by U. S Commanders whether in a joint or multinational context, their conduct is governed by deliberate policy developed and promulgated by the National Command Authority (NCA)." In addition, planning for such operations "must be based on national policy and reflects legal obligations and constraints found in the U. S. Constitution, statutory law, judicial decisions, presidential directives…" Furthermore, it is the "interagency coordination that forms the vital link between the military and the economic, political and/or diplomatic and informational entities of the US Government…"⁵⁰

US Army Field Manual 41-10 (Civil Affairs operations) states, "the military commanders must consider not only the military forces but also the environment in which these forces operate" and that "a supportive populace can provide material resources that facilitate friendly operations." One of the critical components of civil military operations is legitimacy. Because civil affairs personnel "focus on the relationship between the civil and military environments, legitimacy and credibility are key issues." 52

first major conflict that required projection of combat power along long lines of communication. Historically, this was never more evident than in Winfield Scott's campaign for Mexico City. Scott, a self-taught military strategist, translated the president's guidance, developed a strategic plan, and then executed what was to date the "most ambitious amphibious expedition in human history." He played the roles that we now know as Commander in Chief (CINC), strategic planner and service chief. General Scott as the service chief not only developed the resourcing plan (establishing the army from active duty strength of 2,000 at the beginning of the war to 75,000) for the Mexican War but he also demonstrated an understanding of force projection and amphibious operations. An example of General Scott's appreciation for this environment is his design and procurement of unique landing craft called flatboats for use at Vera Cruz. ⁵²

The Mexican War was a limited war. The troop strength in Mexico was never more that 8,000 soldiers and sailors. President Polk remained ever concerned at the expense of the war and its effect on the American economy. Though the casualties of the war were insignificant compared to the civil war, the cost was high. Nearly 1,800 soldiers died of wounds and another 17,000 of disease.

Scott was clearly visionary in regards to the conduct of civil-military operations. He recognized the relationship between severing his secure lines of communication and developing positive relations with the local population and government. He was able to maintain positive relations for the duration of the campaign for Mexico City. He recognized the center of gravity to winning the hearts and minds of the Mexican people—the Catholic Church. He outwardly demonstrated his respect for that organization and demanded the same from his soldiers. He was simultaneously able to take the lessons from the European military masters and develop new concepts for a limited war. In some instances he broke all the rules as demonstrated when he cut himself from his secure line of communication at Vera Cruz. General Scott demonstrated an ability to synthesize new concepts in dealing with a different type of conflict—a type of war that Napoleon, De Saxe or Jomini were not familiar with in European campaigns.

Current doctrine states that Civil Military Operations (CMO) policy is so sensitive that it must be governed by deliberate policy developed by the National Command Authority (NCA). General Scott clearly developed the CMO policy in his campaign in Mexico, thereby functioning squarely in the political arena and in place of the NCA by default. The communications systems available in 1846 ensured that General Scott would continue to have great latitude in this area—messages by sea at best arrived in several weeks time. Nicholas Trist's arrival placed the president's political representative with the army in the field; however, General Scott remained squarely in the middle of all CMO/political decisions.

General Scott operated in an environment that no contemporary military officer would recognize. The army of 1847 was still extremely political. There were no unified commands or Joint Chiefs of Staff and consequently interagency coordination fell upon the service chiefs. Based on Secretary of War Marcy's reaction to Scott's civil-military (martial law) policy there may not have been a well-established interagency process. President Polk as the Chief Executive and Commander in Chief was as concerned with the political affiliation of his generals as he was with their strategic and operational competence. General Scott was able to transcend these challenges and successfully prosecute the war with Mexico both in Washington and in the theater of operations.

General Scott established his position as one of the great strategic thinkers of his time. Though he did not benefit from a traditional military education as a student of the United States Military Academy, many of the officers assigned to his command did attend the academy. Scott was able to pass on to these young officers the experience he had gained in his nearly 40 years of service. In fact from General Scott many future general officers learned audacity, delegation of responsibility, the value of a well-trained general staff, the necessity of reconnaissance, the advantage of flanking marches and the brand new idea of living off the country side without any supply lines. Scott, the product of self-study and personal experience, served as an example for the great captains of the Civil War.⁵³

CONCLUSION

General Scott's conduct of operations in Mexico City was phenomenal. Although President Polk wanted the operation concluded with vigor, Scott recognized the need to avoid squandering his soldier's lives and that destroying the Mexican capital might win the war but lose the peace. Scotts' management of the government proved insightful and effective as attested to by the job offer he received to function as the interim president. Scotts' attainment of reparations further accomplished one of President Polk's goals—to gain indemnity.

The positive results of the war cannot be denied. As a result, the United States gained significant land and mineral resources. Unfortunately, "the war also further complicated its own internal struggle over the expansion of Human slavery." However, an unmistakable sense of adventurism and romantic fervor in America had been aroused. The public in general, and even distinguished artists such as Walt Whitman, embraced the war effort stating "let our arms now be carried with a spirit which shall teach the world that, while we are not forward for a quarrel, America knows how to crush, as well as how to expand." **

James Robertson, biographer of Stonewall Jackson, stated in reference to Scott's conduct of his campaign in Mexico that "never had an American general accomplished more, with fewer men and with less support from his government." 56

Finally, one of our nation's greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln, demonstrated his tremendous respect for General Scott when he and his entire cabinet visited the ailing general at his residence. President Lincoln later provided one of the greatest testimonies to Winfield Scott's tremendous service to this nation by expressing "the deep regret which he, in common with the whole country, felt in parting with a public servant so venerable in years and so illustrious for the services he had rendered." 57

WORD COUNT = 6839

ENDNOTES

- ¹ John S. D. Eisenhower, <u>Agent of Destiny</u>, (New York, New York: The Free Press, 1997),
 - ² Ibid, 10.
- ³ Richard Bruce Winders, <u>Polk's Army</u>, (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 4.
- ⁴ Winfield Scott, <u>The Autobiography of Lieut. Gen. Winfield Scott</u>, (New York, New York: Sheldon and Company, Publishers, 1864), xx
 - ⁵ Ibid, 78.
 - ⁶ Ibid, 206.
- ⁷ BG Thomas R. Phillips, ed, <u>Roots of Strategy Book II</u>, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1985), 324-325
 - ⁸ Ibid, 327.
 - ⁹ Ibid, 246, 258.
 - ¹⁰ Ibid. 428.
 - ¹¹ Ibid. 438.
 - ¹² Ibid, 480.
 - ¹³ Ibid, 535.
- ¹⁴ Timothy Johnson, <u>Winfield Scott</u>, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 133.
 - ¹⁵ Winders, <u>Polk's Army,</u> 5.
 - ¹⁶ Eisenhower, Agent of Destiny, 183
- ¹⁷ Norman A. Graebner, "War Aims," in <u>The Mexican War: Crisis for American Democracy</u>, ed. Archie McDonald, (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1969), 23.
 - ¹⁸ Ibid, 25.
 - ¹⁹ Ibid, 25.
- ²⁰ Dean B. Mahan, <u>The Olive Branch and the Sword</u>, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co. Inc., 1997), 80

- ²¹, Eugene McCormac, <u>James K. Polk, a Political Biography</u>, (Berkley: University of California Berkeley Press, 1922), 722
 - ²² Johnson, Winfield Scott, 151.
 - ²³ Mahan, The Olive Branch and the Sword, 85
 - ²⁴ Johnson, Winfield Scott, 151.
- ²⁵ James K. Polk, <u>The Diary of a President 1845-1849</u>, (New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1929), 208
 - ²⁶ Scott, The Autobiography of Lieut. Gen. Winfield Scott, 392-3.
 - ²⁷ Ibid, 393.
 - ²⁸ Mahan, The Olive Branch and the Sword, 87.
 - ²⁹ Ibid, 76.
 - ³⁰ McCormac, <u>James K. Polk, a Political Biography</u>, 418.
 - ³¹ Mahan, The Olive Branch and the Sword, 80.
 - 32 Ibid, 80
 - ³³ Ibid, 85.
 - ³⁴ Ibid, 85.
 - ³⁵ Hans W. Holmer, "A Study In Leadership," <u>Infantry Journal</u>, August 1927, 160
 - ³⁶ Johnson, Winfield Scott, 166.
 - ³⁷ Polk, <u>The Diary of a President 1845-1849</u>, 208.
 - ³⁸ Johnson, Winfield Scott, 165.
 - ³⁹ Ibid, 165
 - ⁴⁰ Ibid, 175.
 - ⁴¹ Ibid, 179
 - ⁴² Ibid, 188.
 - ⁴³ Ibid, 195
 - 44) Eisenhower, Agent of Destiny, 246

- ⁴⁵ Johnson, Winfield Scott, 195.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 194.
- ⁴⁷ Russell F. Weigley, <u>The American Way of War</u>, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 75
- ⁴⁸ Department of Defense, <u>Joint Doctrine for Civil Military Operations</u>, Joint Publication 3-57, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Defense, 8 February 2001), vii
 - ⁴⁹ Ibid, II-5.
- ⁵⁰ Department of the Army, <u>Civil Affairs Operations</u>, Field Manual 41-10,(Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of the Army, 14 February 2000), 1-1.
 - ⁵¹ Ibid, 1-10.
 - ⁵² Eisenhower, Agent of Destiny, 234.
- ⁵³ John C. Waugh, The Proving Ground, in <u>Civil War Times Illustrated</u> 35, no 1 (1996): 34-43
 - 54 Graebner, The Mexican War: Crisis for American Democracy, vii
- ⁵⁵ K. Jack Bauer, <u>The Mexican War 1846-1848</u> (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), 69
 - ⁵⁶ Johnson, Winfield Scott, 207.
- ⁵⁷ Henry J. Raymond, <u>The Life and Public Services of Abraham Lincoln Together With His State Papers</u>. (New York: Derby and Miller Publications, 1865), 204.

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